

Housing Management Bulletin



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Management - Panel policy
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MANAGEMENT REPORTS ON GRADED RENTS

Rental Problems and Income Limitations is one of the six major subjects assigned for round table discussion at each of the series of regional conferences which NAHO is conducting this winter. At the Region IV conference in Macon, Georgia, November 18-20, William R. Geddings, one of the leadoff speakers for the session and Supervising Manager for the Housing Authority of Columbia, South Carolina, made a particularly comprehensive report of the experience of his Authority in this respect. He first summarized the general problem, saying: "If rents are set too high, they will not be within the reach of low-income families. If they are set too low, the annual subsidy from the United States government must be greater, with a correspondingly greater drain on the treasury. We all agree that it is highly important that the government subsidies, which represent the actual cost of our program to the taxpayer, must be kept at a minimum."

The Columbia Plan

The method recommended by Mr. Geddings to meet this problem is, first, the making of a city survey to determine the income range to be served by a housing program and from these facts to establish income limits as required by the United States Housing Act. With these data at hand, Mr. Geddings then recommends the setting up, as in Columbia, of a system of graded rents. The Columbia plan has been to establish three rent schedules and assign income limits to each schedule, as follows:

	Unit Size	Rental per Month	Yearly Income
I	3-room	\$ 7.65	Not to exceed \$410
	5-room	10.90	
II	3-room	11.10	Between \$410-\$715
	5-room	13.85	
III	3-room	14.00	Not to exceed \$715
	5-room	16.75	

One of the special features of the Columbia plan is that it has not limited income to five times the rent but to four times the rent and, in addition, as a means of encouraging tenant initiative for income improvement, allows income increases before eviction to go up to 20 per cent. Another means of keeping families on the project who are actually in the low-income bracket but whose incomes have increased, is to shift them from the lower rental scales into the higher.

The Pittsburgh Plan

In Pittsburgh a four grade rent system is used, following the same general pattern as the Columbia schedule. The Pittsburgh plan, however, has one unique feature; no dwelling unit is specifically placed in any one rent grade in advance of leasing. The Manager is free to establish the rent grade for each dwelling unit on the basis of the particular family size and income. The only restriction upon the Manager in this respect lies in the fact that a proper number of dwelling units is designated as belonging in each rent grade and the Manager may not exceed or fall below that particular number without consent from the central office. Such consent will almost never be given for the reason that the number of dwelling units renting in each grade is determined by the budget which is prepared in advance and which necessitates a certain amount of income from rents.

The advantages of this system, the Pittsburgh Authority feels, are first, that the Manager has a great deal of flexibility in renting his project; second, the entirely false system of renting subsidized dwelling units on a theory of differences in amenities or locations is avoided. It has been found that a tenant is much more easily satisfied this way than if he is arbitrarily forced to take a dwelling unit, the rent of which has been established in advance.

NEW MEMBERS

Bohnen, Arthur - Chicago, Illinois
 Bortz, L.S. - Executive Director, Reading Housing Authority
 Bowles, George L. - Management Supervisor, Boston Housing Authority
 Braden, Roy S. - Community Manager, Greenbelt (Md.)
 Burrus, Mrs. Frances M. - Tenant Selection Supervisor, Director of Community Activities, Mravlag Manor (Elizabeth, N.J.)
 Collins, Fred J. - Assistant to Executive Director, Newark Housing Authority
 Convery, Neil J. - Executive Director, Newark Housing Authority
 Engel, Delbert F. - staff, Greendale, (Wis.)
 Fiore, Nicholas - Housing Manager, Stephen Crane Village, Newark
 Garretson, Gilbert I. - Executive Director Housing Authority of the City of Laredo (Texas)
 Garties, George, Director, Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority
 Gerhardt, William H. - Supervisor of Tenant Applications, Chicago Housing Authority
 Handy, George L. - Field Interviewer, Alley Dwelling Authority for the District of Columbia
 Harper, C. W. - Executive Director, Housing Authority of the City of El Paso (Texas)
 Hatchet, Taylor - Assistant Director, Portsmouth (Ohio) Metropolitan Housing Authority
 Hoffman, Mrs. Helen K. - Supervisor and Manager, R. J. McMullen - Charles Miller Company, Oakland
 Huberman, Edward - Training and Personnel Relations Advisor, USHA
 Hunter, Robert Lealand - Secretary and Executive Director, Housing Authority of the City of Fort Worth
 Kent, David - Supervisor of Maintenance and Operation, Newark Housing Authority
 MacAfee, Roy Berton - Supervisor of Tenant Relations and Tenant Selection, Greendale (Wis.)
 MacLean, Mrs. Donald - Manager and Assistant Treasurer, Brooklyn Garden Apartments, Inc., New York City
 Naylor, Dowell - Executive Director, Housing Authority of the City of Waco
 Ouren, Edward M. - Housing Manager, Logan Fontenelle Homes and South Side Terrace Homes, Omaha
 Patton, Leslie - Housing Management Supervisor, USHA
 Putnam, Charlton D. - Director, Dayton Metropolitan Housing Authority
 Roark, Clemons M. - Executive Director, Housing Authority of the County of Beaver (Pa.)
 Rosahn, Beatrice G. - Research Consultant, Citizens' Housing Council of New York
 Scheib, J. Gilbert - Project Manager, Housing Authority of New Orleans
 Scott, Mrs. Essie Hague - Senior Management Aide, Cuthwaite Homes, Cleveland
 Sheehan, Frank E. - Director, Portsmouth (Ohio) Metropolitan Housing Authority
 Smith, A. Maes - Racial Relations Advisor, Region VI, USHA
 Smyth, P. Joseph - Executive Director, New Bedford Housing Authority
 Sullivan, John A. - Management Aide, Mravlag Manor, Elizabeth (N.J.)
 Summers, Lillian - Supervisor of Applications, Ida B. Wells Homes, Chicago
 Tufts, Joseph P. - Executive Director Pittsburgh Housing Association
 Walker, William R., Jr. - Community Manager, Aberdeen Gardens, Newport News (Va.)
 Weiss, Harry B. - Director, Tenant Relations Department, Newark Housing Authority
 Wessel, Meyer - Housing Manager, Westfield Acres, Camden
 Winston, Oliver C. - Director, Region III, USHA

A COOPERATIVE COMMUNITY RECREATION PROGRAM

by Ira E. Lute

Housing Manager, Lincoln Park Homes, Denver

When it had been determined that Lincoln Park Homes was to be constructed in the neighborhood which for many years had been served by the Garfield Community Center (a Community Chest supported agency), negotiations were entered into by the Denver Housing Authority and the Board of Directors of the Center which resulted in an agreement whereby, for a consideration of \$30 a month to be paid by the Center, the Authority places at the disposal of the Center the educational and recreational facilities of Lincoln Park Homes.

Articles of Agreement

The principal articles in the agreement provide that the Center is to change its name to Lincoln Park Community Center; that the Center will conduct social, educational, and recreational activities, not only in behalf of tenants of Lincoln Park Homes, but for the entire neighboring community, regardless of race, creed, or color; that it will arrange, direct, conduct, and carry out its programs subject to the direction of an operating committee composed of four members, two of whom will be appointed by the Authority and two by the Center.

The Center will furnish at its own expense a Director and such other personnel as may be required to carry out the program. The Center will also furnish its own equipment, supplies, telephone, and janitor service. The Center agrees to abide by all rules and regulations of the Authority and by all local ordinances.

This agreement, which has been officially approved by the Denver Community Chest, which contributes annually \$5,000 to the budget of the Center, is effective for one year from the completion of Lincoln Park Homes and may be renewed, if mutually agreeable, upon ninety days notice or may be terminated by either party upon thirty days notice.

Authority Provides Space, Utilities

The space provided by the Housing Authority consists of three floors, including the basement. The basement will be furnished for a general playroom; the first or main floor as an assembly room, equipped with lavatories, kitchen, and storage closet; the second floor will consist of offices for the Center and three club rooms separated by accordion doors. This floor also has lavatories and ample closets. Each of these floors contains approximately 2000 square feet of space. The Authority will furnish the necessary electricity, gas, water, heat, and all other so-called utilities but reserves the right to use the space and equipment for its own needs at times mutually agreeable. The right is also retained to rearrange the rooms as may be deemed necessary or advisable.

It is fundamental that the program of activities shall grow out of Lincoln Park Homes and contiguous neighborhood and shall not be superimposed. The Center will bring over from its present program such groups as Boy Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, football and baseball leagues, dramatic clubs, children's theater, etc. It will seek to develop acquaint-

anceship between parents residing in Lincoln Park Homes and those residing in the neighborhood and will promote social gatherings for this purpose. It will also conduct games for children for the purpose of acquaintanceship and the development of a wholesome community spirit. Out of this program it is expected that groups will develop, such as in folk dancing, dramatics, crafts, or some such cultural interest. An effort will be made to discover and furnish an outlet for special talents in music and other arts and skills. Informal education and recreation will be planned under neighborhood leadership. In short, the entire program will be as democratic as possible -- not superimposed but developed naturally.

Other Agencies Cooperate

A City park lies just to the south of Lincoln Park Homes across the street and the Mayor and City officials are very much interested in having the playground facilities of the park used by the Authority and Center for their recreational programs, particularly with older children. This interest is evidenced by the City's having enlarged the swimming pool in the park to twice its original size and having made additions to playground equipment. Lincoln Park Day Nursery (another Chest supported agency), public and parochial schools, churches, and clinics handy to Lincoln Park Homes and vicinity are also greatly interested and have volunteered their fullest cooperation. It is believed by both parties to these agreements that a properly supervised social, educational, and recreational program is desirable and advantageous in a community as a deterrent to crime and juvenile delinquency.

THE MASTHEAD

On the right and on the left -- Macon's recently tenanted Oglethorpe Homes, 156-unit USHA-aided project.

MANAGEMENT CONTRIBUTES TO DESIGN

Appreciation of what and how much management can contribute to public housing design has just begun to be felt within the past year. Both the Los Angeles and Cambridge Authorities have listed as guides for future construction the weaknesses which time and experience have revealed to exist in their first projects. The Cambridge Authority's list is the result of a form letter sent to all 294 families in their New Towne Court project asking for "detailed comment and suggestion wherein New Towne Court is faulty and wherein the contemplated addition may be made more efficient in the provision of living facilities." They asked for specific remarks on "kitchen and wash room arrangement, room size and arrangement, building materials, arrangement of buildings, arrangement and character of play areas, and any other aspect." The Los Angeles' list was drawn up by the Projects Manager of the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles as the result of his initial experiences at Carmelitos, the Authority's first and newly tenanted project.

Housewives Complain

The Cambridge list of weaknesses is heavily on the side of criticisms by the housewife. Of 69 replies, note the following: 27 - cook stove too near window; 23 - kitchen too small; 19 - cupboards too high and too small; 15 - laundry space too small; 14 - prefer outdoor drying space; 13 - more closets needed. In addition and more or less of the same character are these criticisms from New Towne tenants: 30 - dislike casement windows; 21 - casein paint unsatisfactory (from the standpoint of cleanliness); 20 - play space too small; 12 - apartments over laundries too warm.

Los Angeles Suggests

From their initial experience in Los Angeles, the management there offers these suggestions:

1 - See that some provision is made for attaching gates at the head of the stairs to keep the small fry from falling down and breaking their necks. If this is anticipated early in construction it can be done without any additional expense.

2 - Try and work out some scheme whereby there will be no windows over the bathtub. We are finding that people step in the tubs with hobnailed shoes in order to get to the windows, which ruins the tub and also causes injuries.

3 - If you have incinerators built on the project, have your own project employees break them in by firing several times with not too hot a fire. More than half of our incinerators have practically been ruined by allowing the tenants to load them up and light them, thereby creating too much heat all at once.

And see that . . . the rods in closets are placed far enough away from the wall so that the coat hangers will hang straight. . . garbage collection stations are placed in respect to the least inconvenience to tenants. . . storage space is provided for lawn mowers, tools, fire extinguishers, hose, children's playthings, washing machines . . .

HINTS TO THE HOUSING MANAGER

NEW PROJECT . . . NEW IDEAS

► With the opening of their first project, the management of the Macon Authority is trying out a number of new ideas:

1 - In order to have a complete preoccupancy record of the equipment and utilities in every project unit, the management has a maintenance man make a checkup and submit a signed report on each unit as soon as it is rented, covering: Range - do all burners light; has the oven been tested; has the oven control been tested; are there any connection leaks. Hot Water Heater - is pilot light burning; does heater operate satisfactorily; are there any connection leaks. Space Heater - is thermostat handle attached; is pilot light burning; are there any connection leaks. Sink - are there any leaks; is there a stopper in sink, basin, tub. Refrigerator - has it been checked for satisfactory operation. Electrical - is unit fully equipped with fuses; are all light sockets working; meter reading.

2 - To establish a personal relationship with each tenant, Jack Cutler, Executive Director of the Authority, has each tenant come into his office to sign his lease and to discuss his new living arrangements.

3 - At no additional cost, each unit in Oglethorpe Homes has been provided with a glass mail box in lieu of either the customary metal box which soon rusts and bends or the rather inconvenient letter slot which is at times inaccessible to the postman--if, for example, the screen doors are locked.

4 - Each unit is also provided with concrete flower boxes,

which contribute much to the appearance of the homes.

MOUNTAIN TO MOHAMMED

► In Great Falls (Montana) tenant applications are being taken on what might be termed a door-to-door basis. Harry Olson, Project Manager, writes: "After a drop in the number of applications received here, in spite of continued publicity, we changed tactics. Our case worker, who had also written applications previously, was assigned to direct publicity in the homes of prospects. He was placed on the quota basis of twenty applications per week. He was also asked to complete home visits at the same time that applications were taken.

"He failed to make the quota the first week, and some of the applications did not include home visits, but we felt that substantial gains were made because additional appointments for the following week had been made for both home visits and prospective tenants. The prospects, too, seemed to be well impressed with this added service. This is possibly of especial value at this time because of the cold weather. Our applications practically doubled, with a higher proportion of Apparently Eligibles and Deferreds."

REPAIR RECORDS

► In order to know what parts of the plant are most costly in terms of repair and what parts need repair most often and in order to find what families give most work to repair men, C. A. Wright, Maintenance Superintendent for the Louisville Municipal Housing Commission, recommends the record system used there. When a tenant needs repairs in his apartment, he requests service by a card which is signed by a

clerk or some responsible management employee. The card is then sent to file, either for immediate attention or for attention at the convenience of the maintenance mechanic. The mechanic collects those in the active file daily and makes his rounds. If the repair is the fault of tenant, the maintenance man explains the error; in each house he checks the apartment thoroughly for other needed repairs. He then reports all work done on the back of the tenant's request-for-service card and information from these cards is then entered on a chart which is drawn up to indicate which apartments cause the most trouble and which features of construction give the most difficulty.

TENANT HISTORY CARD

► Entered on a single record card for a visible filing system is the personal, financial, project occupancy, credit, and miscellaneous history of each tenant in the Philadelphia Authority's projects. Leon Raider, Manager of Tasker Homes, submitted one of the cards to the BULLETIN. It is a 6" square folded card, providing four writing surfaces. Use of this card permits checking at one reference source on every phase of a tenant's history rather than collecting data separately from tenant application files, rent records, maintenance records, etc.

WINTERIZING

► At Greendale (Wisconsin) tenants who are away from home for a period longer than a week during the winter season may have their plumbing protected against freezing by the management free of charge. Absence for shorter periods must be provided for by the tenants. Damage resulting from freezing due to neglect must be paid for by the tenant.

